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TRUTH ABOUT POWER IS SPOKEN HERE
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WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

Another high-rise to dread

APART FROM CONDO PLANS, AN ECOLOGICAL DISASTER APPROACHES WITH SEA LEVEL RISE

by Mike Coday

Global warming scientists with the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group (CIG) are projecting sea level rise for Olympia that sounds like a slow-motion tsunami. The CIG report includes a low-probability, high impact event for sea level rise of 20 inches by 2050 and 50 inches by 2100 for South Puget Sound. Works in Progress was downtown recently to review sea level rise with the Kissing Couple because 20 inches and a high tide of 17 to 18 feet will put Olympia's most famous romantic couple knee-deep in the Big Muddy. The couple were recovering from the Procession of the Species festivities and declined to speak on the record.

Olympia Public Works Director Michael Mucha agreed to meet with WIP and answer a few questions about the City's plan to deal with rising sea level. Mucha and City Manager Steve Hall were previously interviewed on sea level rise by online magazine Governing.com in December 2007. That interview was covered by WIP in July 2008. The City's planning for sea level rise uses benchmarks of one, two and three feet of sea level rise. The current CIG numbers suggest those benchmarks may be too conservative. Mucha stated in the December 2007 interview, "I'm not concerned about getting the sea-level rise numbers precisely right. If we can all agree that there will be some amount of sea-level rise instead of arguing over how much, we'll get a lot further."

WORKS IN PROGRESS: So, how about the numbers today. With the current projections for increasing global sea level rise and the special issues facing Olympia with storm surge, high tides, and subsidence, are you more concerned about getting the numbers right now than you were in December 2007? Do you think the planning for sea level rise of one, two and three feet is sufficient if the IPCC is now suggesting the rise could be 1 meter or more and the CIG is suggesting the low-probability, high-impact level of 20 to 50 inches? Should Olympia's planning criteria be expanded to review sea level rises of four feet or more?

▸ **SEA LEVEL, continued on** page 3

The kissing couple might need a canoe to extend their makeout time. Photo by Mike Coday

Newspapers in deeper crisis than they think

by Joshua Neuhouser

Since *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* stopped its presses this March, The McClatchy Company has held a virtual monopoly on newspapers in Washington, owning *The Olympian*, *The Tacoma News-Tribune*, and a significant minority share of *The Seattle Times*, among others. Mount Vernon's *Skagit Valley Herald*, while locally owned, has begun to merge many of its operations with McClatchy's *Bellingham Herald*.

Yet McClatchy has come out of Seattle's newspaper wars an uncertain victor, and the company is in such poor financial shape that the New York Stock Exchange has given them warning that if they don't come up with a plan to turn their fortunes around by May 29, they will be de-listed.

And as is happening across the country, the role of organized labor in the newspaper industry has been not to negotiate gains with the bosses but to negotiate losses.

Union members at *The Seattle Times* have agreed to a package of wage and pension freezes, wage reductions, and unpaid time off, while the new online-only version of the *P-I* is for the time being union free. "The advantage of being union over non-union in these times is that you have some choice over where to make the cuts," says Liz Brown, administrator for the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild.

"We're trying to survive and we're trying to help employers survive...employers say we have to do more with less," she states. "But we have to do less with less."

Some newspapers have made the decision to face reality and began making cuts. *The Olympian*, for example, has moved its deadline to the excessively early time of 9:00 PM.

"If a high school soccer game doesn't end until 8:30, then I don't really have time to write about it," says Brendan Funtek, who worked in the paper's sports department until the recent layoffs. "Or there was a late Mariners game the other night. Ichiro had a game-winning home run, it was great. Didn't make it into the paper the following day."

He also points out that this will have a negative impact on the reporting of local politics. Tuesday city council meetings regularly run past nine o'clock, and will go unreported.

Meanwhile, extensive layoffs are being made – not based on seniority or performance, but based on which positions that Human Resources bureaucrats somewhere in the McClatchy Company's Sacramento headquarters have decided that *The Olympian* could do without.

When laid off reporters complained that none of the paper's attempts at reorganizing itself make any sense, their higher-ups at *The Olympian* concurred, stating that none of it makes any sense to them, either. The newsroom has shrunk by nearly half, and this loss of reporters forebodes a future where *The Olympian* neglects to do much else besides uncritically reprint articles on national and international events written elsewhere. The local news section has already been merged with the front section, where the paper functions as little more than a dump for whatever comes over the Associated Press wire. "This whole thing stands as some sort of bizarre experiment to tear a newspaper apart while keeping it still running under its masthead," Funtek tells me.

> The daily newspaper may have been made obsolete by the Internet, but it was ultimately killed by the weakness of its content.

Yet just because a newspaper is printing local news does not necessarily mean that the reporting is high quality. Many local radicals believe that *The Olympian* operates in a manner which has more in common with Stan Lee's caricatural depictions of Daily Bugle editor-in-chief Jonah Jameson bellowing out that his paper will never print a kind word about Spider-Man than the rather mundane reality. Yet it cannot be denied that the Daily Zero has made some rather strange editorial choices as of late.

From Executive Editor Vickie Kilgore stating that "newsroom staff did not get attacked by police" during the port protests of November 2007 (a plain falsehood) to supporting the isthmus rezone and neglecting to take a stand on the City Council's "emailgate" scandal until upstaged by the *News-Tribune*, *The Olympian* has consistently represented not the interests of average citizens but those of people with power and influence in this town.

Many lamented the P-I's closure because the paper was seen as a holdover from what the city had been before gentrification, a perception that was primarily thanks to the influence of the now-deceased journalist Emmett Watson. Watson had headed a fictional organization called Lesser Seattle, Inc. which operated under the slogan "Keep the Bastards Out!" – the bastards in question being yuppies moving into the region from California and New York City.

Watson's warnings that his city was losing its soul have taken on a special significance for many as low-income residents get priced out in order to make way for condos that don't sell in an ebbing wave of real estate speculation that has left nothing but blighted neighborhoods in its wake. Seattle is, after all, now a city where parts of the Central District are starting to resemble downtown Bellevue, and where the battle for ownership of the University District between gutter punks and college students has been decisively won in favor of the latter.

But his anti-growth stance was a pose, and Watson was privately enamored with the hustle and bustle seen downtown during the bubble economy. It is also unfair to praise a newspaper for employing a writer who they treated so poorly that they eventually drove him to work for their chief rival. Though Watson's curmudgeonly stance was tolerated by Hearst as long as his tongue remained firmly planted in cheek, he opened the paper one morning to find that his column had been dropped after unironically criticizing certain management decisions made at the Mariner's back in the 1980's.

The daily newspaper – whose demise we are witnessing with the fall of *The Post-Intelligencer*, *The Rocky Mountain News*, the pending collapse of *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and the gutting of the survivors – may have been made obsolete by the Internet, but it was ultimately killed by the weakness of its content. The issue is not only the overly-emphasized competition from new media sources or the dire economic situation of our country as a whole, but the fact that news reporting as a for profit venture in a society divided by class can never be relevant to the needs and interests of the the entire population. The enterprise was flawed from the start. But so far, the industry has reacted either with fatalism in the face of economic crisis or by trying to change habits of news consumption – as if saturating the Internet like it's 1999 would reverse their predicament.

However, two months ago Maryland Senator Benjamin Cardin proposed an interesting bill called the Newspaper Revitalization Act, which would allow newspapers to reclassify themselves as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

The models of National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service are invoked in support of the proposed act, which ignores the fact that NPR and PBS have bucked corporate control only to end up dependent on wealthy and often powerful donors, and that money for existing nonprofit organizations has been drying up as well. Nevertheless, the fact that the bill is being considered is an indication of just how drastically newspapers will have to restructure themselves in order to survive.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions

Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

We value well-researched pieces that cover news stories that would be informative to readers in the South Sound. We value news and analysis over opinion pieces. We value stories by local authors. We value submissions on stories that are misrepresented or ignored by mainstream media.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *olywip@gmail.com*. Send event announcements to *wipannouncements@gmail.com*.

Or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool

The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

> WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

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Christian DesMarets	Pat Tassoni
Brendan Funtek	Amelia Yankey
Teresa Jennings	Scott Yoos

Mission Statement

"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues

Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. *Works In Progress* is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:
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ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

Venezuelan Film Festival

7 pm, May 4, 5, and 26
Traditions Cafe, 3005 5th Ave SW, Olympia

Evergreen students returning from Venezuela present a series of films about Venezuela's socialist revolution and a discussion of the films/their experiences in Venezuela follow. Venezuelan food offered for a small price, but the films are free! Below is a description of each film:

May 4: ***The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*** is a documentary about the 2002 Venezuelan coup attempt which briefly disposed democratically elected Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez.

May 5: ***El Viejo y Jesus: Profetas de Rebelión*** ("The Old Man and Jesus: Prophets of Rebellion") is a film that follows the lives of two men living on the streets of Caracas during the oil lockout in Venezuela which tried to end the revolutionary process and to squeeze Chávez out of power.

May 26: ***No Volverán*** ("They Will Not Return") tells various stories of the Venezuelan Revolution. The filmmakers from Hands Off Venezuela take us on a journey to visit worker-occupied factories and to the barrios to see how the urban poor live and how they are changing their neighborhoods due to the revolution and community organizing.

More films and dates to be announced!

Walling off peace: The ghetto-ization of the Israeli occupation

7-9 p.m. Wednesday May 6
The Evergreen State College — Sem II B1105

From professor Steve Niva, this talk will provide an overview and analysis of current Israeli occupation strategies that are creating Palestinian ghettoes hemmed in by expanding Israeli settlements, Israeli-only by-pass roads and Israel's massive wall and fence barrier in the West Bank. Based on observations and interviews from a recent trip to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian territories, including discussions with Israeli and Palestinian peace activists, the talk will use maps, photographs and anecdotes to provide a portrait of current developments on the ground in the area.

The Sustainable Prisons Project

3-4:30 p.m. Friday May 8
The Evergreen State College, Sem II C2109

A segment of the annual Synergy Program happening May 6-8, this presentation will focus on: Can prisons save money while saving the environment?

The Sustainable Prisons Project is a partnership of the State Department of Corrections and The Evergreen State College. Our mission is to reduce the cost and environmental impact of prison operations by training prison staff and offenders in science, sustainability and skills for the emerging green economy.

We serve as a model for other prisons and enforced residential institutions and help scientists conduct and share ecological research in collaboration with incarcerated men and women. For more info about the Synergy events this year, check out www2.evergreen.edu/wikis/synergy/index

Latin America Solidarity meeting

5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday May 8
Media Island, 816 Adams St., Olympia

Come join this newly formed group if you are interested in increasing awareness of events concerning countries and peoples in Latin America.

Community dialogue on immigration: Video viewing and training session against anti-immigrant and racist speech

Saturday, May 9, 10:00-2:00 pm, Olympia Unitarian Universalist Church, 2200 E End St NW

Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO) is holding a workshop for those who are interested or need a refresher course in using materials provided by NWFCO to promote awareness and training on empowering people of color and immigrants to the US. The training session will include the viewing of Wrong Then, Wrong Now, a video created that showcases examples of racist and derogatory speech used by media personalities and elected officials along with a following discussion and training activities including the "immigration board game," practicing using the discussion guide for your network. If you are already familiar and comfortable with using the board game then please come at 11 for the rest of the training.

Contact Carrie Tracy (206) 568 5400 or Shelley Spalding (360) 427 7444 for any additional information.

Mothers Day peace walk

Sunday, May 10, gather at 11:45-- walk at noon, Meet at 5th and Water St.- Around Capitol Lake to the motherhood statue. Downtown Olympia.

Walk with mothers and others for peace-no signs please.

Sponsored by Women in Black, for more information contact Ginny 360-596-9899 or ginnysgarden@comcast.net

The Closure Myth: Critical perspectives on the death penalty

7 pm, May 11 at Lecture Hall 1, Evergreen State College

The Closure Myth is the story of Aba Gayle, a woman whose daughter was stabbed to death in 1980, yet who now visits the murderer on death row and advocates on his behalf.

Join us for an evening of discussion with Aba Gayle and a short viewing of her powerful documentary.

The New Narrative: Local Voices for a Global Future – Free Multimedia and Community Gathering Event

Friday, May 15, 5:30-9:30 pm, Capitol Theater, 206 Fifth Ave SE

The Global Oneness Project is a non-profit media organization that documents the growing understanding of what it means to be part of one interconnected, interdependent world. Since 2006, the Project has interviewed more than 100 people from many countries working in the fields of sustainability, conflict resolution, spirituality, art, economics, indigenous wisdom, social justice, and politics. Together, the Global Oneness Project and the Olympia Film Society present a free multimedia and community gathering event that includes film screenings of several short documentaries; a presentation from pioneering community organizer, Orland Bishop; and a Q&A with film maker, Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee.

Film screening begins at 6:30 pm, for more information about this event, please contact Megan McFeely at mmcfeely@earthlink.net. For additional information contact: events@globalonenessproject.org or visit: www.globalonenessproject.org

Mason County Spell-E-Bration

6 p.m. Friday, May 15 at the Shelton Civic Center on the corner of 5th and Cota Streets.

Mason County Literacy is calling all spellers! It's that time of year again, the season to dust off that dictionary and sign up to compete in Spring Spell-E-Bration, Mason County Literacy's annual fundraiser. There are still opportunities to become a team sponsor, speller, or auction donor. To sign up or for more information, contact the office at Mason County Literacy, 426-9733.

The event is free and open to the public, join us for a fun filled family evening. For more info, check out masoncountyliteracy.org/spellebration.htm

Anti-oppression training with Leticia Nieto

Saturday, May 16, 9 am-5 pm
The Evergreen State College – exact location available through registration

This popular workshop with Leticia Nieto, Ph.D, will offer an opportunity to explore issues of privilege, power and oppression, as well as offering a shared language to exchange ideas. Pre-registration is required. Invite your friends! Sponsored by Mideast Solidarity Project, Coalition Against Sexual Violence, Icarus Project, and Women's Resource Center. Donations accepted and pre-registration required. Email Mideast Solidarity Project at sesame@evergreen.edu for more information.

Community forum on free health care: Toward a free health clinic

Thursday, May 21, Refreshments at 6:30 pm, Forum from 7:00pm – 9:00pm, The Olympia Center, Room 204, 222 Columbia St NW

Featured panelists include: Dr. Muhammad Ayub, MD and MPH at Madigan Army Medical Center; Peter Bohmer, longtime activist, organizer and resident of Olympia; Aaron Dixon, Former captain of the Black Panther Party in Seatte, he helped establish the first free clinics in Seattle that still exist today; Rob Richards, former staff at Bread and Roses, organizer for the Poor People's Union and the poor people's tent city Camp Quixote; Linda Sternhill Davis, Legislative Committee Co-Chair and advocate for universal, single-payer health care reform at the state and national levels. She also worked at the Los Angeles Free Clinic.

Like all communities across the country and around the world, our community in Olympia has been affected by the recent economic crisis. This has presented many challenges to the majority of people. One major challenge is access to affordable health care. We believe that everyone has the right to affordable, even free health care, and the knowledge it takes to prevent illness and disease. We hope that this forum will build connections between people who are passionate about this issue and that we can work together in creating a tangible solution to this problem: a free health clinic in Olympia.

For more info contact: olyfreehealthcare@riseup.net, 360 701-8810. Brought to you by the Olympia branch of Common Action (nwcommonaction.org).

▸ **SEA LEVEL** continued from page 1

MICHAEL MUCHA: Well, I think that the numbers are about the same. One to three feet is what we are still working on for fifty years, it could be three feet, it's hard to know how far to go. We are going to be working with our City Council to determine, do we take a very conservative position which would be a high number or a low number, which is a policy decision. Three feet is probably a median.

The International Panel on Climate Change began their March 2009 meeting in Copenhagen by announcing that their 2007 projections on sea level rise were too conservative and that sea level rise is unlikely to be less than 50 cm by 2100. John Church of the Centre for Australian Weather and Climate Research says the rise could be 1 meter or more. We also have the CIG talking about the low probability, high impact event of 50 inches by 2100. So with those numbers in mind, should we planning for more than 3 feet of sea level rise?

I don't know. We are using the University of Washington Climate Action Group statistics, we are relying on their science. I am not the expert on these projections, I am relying on the experts for guidance based on the best available science. I will say this, we want to be conservative. I would rather over-estimate the impacts, then step back if things turn out to be better rather than to be less conservative and try to catch up.

In the December 2007 article you talked about 100 year capital planning. Is 100 years a standard time frame for public works planning?

No, it isn't. I think a standard planning time horizon for publics is the 6 year capital plan and usually public works will look out 10 to 15 years for the maintenance of assets. 100 years is looking at maybe three life-cycles.

So this circumstance where you are looking at 100 years is very unusual?

It is. It's unusual.

And it's unusual because we are not aware of any other issues that we face like this, right?

Right. It is taking a long term view.

Is there anything else you are looking at out beyond the 20 to 25 year range?

Well, you know with global temperature rising, there is water supply and energy availability, it's not just sea level rise. There is also resource availability, sustainability and that's what the 100 years allows you to do. You can envision the future you want to create. Then you can back-cast and figure out how to get there.

In the Governing article City Manager Steve Hall suggested that the 2008 technical assessment would review solutions such as berming, sea wall construction and technologies already in use around the world to deal with sea level rise, but the May 2008 Sea Level Rise Work Plan makes no mention of these solutions. What is the time horizon on that?

Well, that's actually what we are going to be doing now. We are looking at projects, like what are we going to do around the East Bay development, for example. A lot of the flooding that we could experience from sea level rise will not come from over-topping banks. What actually happens is that the water travels up the sewer pipes, and when the sewer pipes are full, and it's raining, the fresh water will not drain out, so you have this double-whammy effect of fresh water not getting out and bay water coming up into the system and that's why the flooding can occur in parts of the city that may not be right next to the water. Now, getting to your questions about solutions, the solution to that is some simple solutions such as installing check valves to prevent the water from coming back up the drainage system, and then finding other ways of pumping the water that is coming down out and into the bay. Those are shorter term solutions, and likely less costly and more effective than dikes, berms and walling off the water.

In December, 2007 we had a 17 foot tide and the sea level was not quite up to the parking lot behind the Oyster House on Fourth Avenue, but it was close.

Right, it was close. 18 feet is about the parking lot level.

So, if we are talking two feet of sea level rise and we see a tide of 17 or 18 feet, then the Kissing Couple on the Boardwalk will have wet feet.

Right, their ankles will be wet. That's the impact of the combination of an extreme high tide, heavy rains, strong winds and sea level thermal expansion.

The downtown area is also sinking, right? The Kissing Couple and this area of the city is losing elevation. It's projected to sink 8 inches, so we could be talking about a water level at their knees, right?

Right. Well, the three feet comes from two feet of sea level rise, then you have the subsidence and then the surcharge of the prevailing winds pushing more water back into this area and a sloshing effect moving more water here and that's going to contribute to the rise, too.

So, if you project the three foot sea level rise, which is the highest level the City is looking at, where is the shore? What is the landmark that people would understand and say, ok, that's the shore with three feet of sea level rise?

There wouldn't be a shoreline really. I mean, because the water would be coming up in pockets all around. There are going to be areas of the City that are in deeper water because of the low topography, but it's going to generally follow the area where Moxie Creek comes in. The water is going to follow Moxie Creek and areas of the City that have been landfilled, like the Port, are going to be under water. It's going to revert to its natural shoreline of maybe a hundred years ago.

So if you look at a topography map, how far up Fourth Avenue for example are we talking if we are looking at three feet of sea level rise?

Well, it could potentially take it all the way to the existing City Hall.

That's a lot or territory, what about the old Safeway site where City Hall is moving, is that a lot higher than the existing City Hall?

Yes, the new City Hall site is higher.

So you are relying on the University of Washington and CIG for what is going to happen here. And they are suggesting that sea level rise is going to be a slow, gradual process. So what is likelihood of a more dramatic change, where there is a relatively sudden jump of several inches?

A projected sea level rise and flooding map, courtesy of the City of Olympia.

I don't think it's going to happen that way. I think it's going to take a decade view to see if the projections are coming true.

And you have been with Public Works in Olympia for ten years, so do you have any sense from the ten years about how we are doing on sea level rise? Were you looking at shoreline issues ten years ago?

Oh, we were. We have been watching the flooding in downtown Olympia and around Capitol Lake. During the high tide in December we were sandbagging around some local businesses. And with a few other high tides we have had problems in downtown already.

So, we were lucky with the high tide in December 2007, it was a nice day. There was no rain and no wind. There was probably baywater coming back up the pipes, but there was little or no water coming down and trying to drain out.

Right. Not like the event we had this last year with the Deschutes flooding, filling Capitol Lake very quickly and we had a high tide, so we had to manage the flooding very closely.

And right now, our management system for flooding is sandbags?

Sandbags, yes, it's sandbags.

What about pumps?

There are pumps around Capitol Lake. We could be using temporary pumps to manage flooding.

So what about development in this area? Does Public Works have a role in planning and permitting on that?

I think the City does. We are looking at sprawl and flood-hardening structures because we all know there will always be flooding and some areas will always be wet and especially so during infrequent weather and flooding events. So, it's how we let our downtown adapt to rising tides over a certain period of time, then we watch to see how that proceeds.

There are currently at least two significant developments proposed for the isthmus area, an area most at risk from rising sea level and flooding: the Triway housing proposal and the Isthmus Park. An Isthmus Park could be developed as a tide-pool park and be designed with rising sea levels in mind, right?

As Percival Landing is being designed right now. Now, that is going to be construction with saltwater-tolerant materials and it will actually interact with rising tides. That's the design here.

So, what about the Triway development, what kind of planning are they doing for flooding.

There isn't any development plan. There's no plan on the table. .

So if you follow the steps on the permitting, is the review of that kind of development on the horizon?

In plan review, permitting, at the appropriate time.

So what is your sense of the costs? You are saying that the flooding will take place all over town, so are you talking to the City and talking about limiting growth in the area that are going to be at most risk?

That's a really important question. Number one, that's going to be answered through the comprehensive planning that is going on right now and over the next couple of years. Building retrofits for the areas that are going to be more vulnerable than others. So, the farther out we look, we can expect those questions to be answered as we perform the comprehensive planning process.

For more information about sea level rise and how it will affect Olympia, to review the planning that is underway to deal with global warming and the related sea level rise, we recommend the City of Olympia's webpage on Climate Change at ci.olympia.wa.us/community/sustainability/Climate_Change/.

Thank you to the City of Olympia and to Public Works Manager Michael Mucha for agreeing to be interviewed for this article.

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An interview with City Council candidate Janine Gates

What inspired you to run for Olympia City Council at this particular time?

JANINE GATES: Really, I wasn't looking for it but I have mulled it over long and hard for the last couple of months. I asked my son what he thought, because he and I wanted to do some more traveling back to the Middle East. But I felt called to do this, because I'm not seeing that my voice is being represented.

I've lived in Olympia for 25 years, and I love Olympia as we all do. But it's not enough to just love Olympia. You have to be willing to spend the time that it takes to go to the meetings and not just talk the talk but walk the walk. I don't like using clichés, but that really is the best way to describe why I'm doing this, because I feel that I've been doing what I can in the community thus far, but being a councilmember will allow me more opportunities to connect the council with a larger segment of the community that needs to be heard.

Tell us a little bit about your background. What experiences have you had that prepare you for serving as a councilmember?

I've had life experiences! I went to Evergreen and graduated in Communications and Community Development. I've coordinated a lot of community events in Olympia. Some people still remember that I was the co-coordinator of a very active local chapter of Amnesty International before I had my daughter. Now that my kids are older, ages 19 and 14, I feel like in the past few years I've been able to give back through SPEECH (South Puget Environmental Educational Clearinghouse), which publishes the Green Pages. I'm president of that organization and appreciate the voice that it gives to the environmental community. I took care of my grandpa for a few years and I am very grateful that being self-employed for about the last nine years allowed me the opportunity to be with him when he needed me most. Now I do caregiving for the elderly. And I just took my kids to the Middle East on a couple awesome trips.

As a photographer, I have a good working relationship with about 15 local businesses. These are relationships that I've developed through my own marketing efforts by asking the owners to carry my greeting cards or my prints. That's a testament to the kind of dependable, honest relationship I have with a wide spectrum of our community. I'm also a member of the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce. I think I'm able to be a bridge between certain groups that may not ordinarily come into contact with each other. When I was a member of the Lacey Chamber of Commerce, I was chair of the home based business committee for a year, and that really enabled me to meet a lot of people in the community. So this experience makes me attentive to small business concerns, and I will work to pursue incentives to help them succeed.

As a community member, I educate myself by going to lots of public hearings, meetings, and public events. Like everyone else, I do this around my personal and professional lives, around the things I'm doing to bring in money to pay the mortgage, the bills and dog food. I want to make more of a difference.

I spoke with Councilmember Strub recently to tell her that I support her efforts to create a local dog park, and told her about the one I saw in New York City near the Brooklyn Bridge, where there are two of them, one for large dogs, and one a relatively small space for small dogs. Seems easy enough to do.

Why have you chosen to run against Jeff Kingsbury, in particular?

I've actually never had a conversation with him. I really have nothing to say about Jeff personally. I do feel that my approach to leadership is inclusive, approachable, respectful, and open-minded, and I'll use good judgment to make decisions that are in the best public interest. I understand the hard work that goes into being a councilmember and I appreciate all of their efforts. I just feel that I have a voice that is not being represented on the council. People can be very nervous when they appeal to their elected officials, and I would like to make them feel more comfortable in that process, so they feel encouraged to participate in civic life. I will close my laptop during public testimony.

What's the biggest environmental issue you see facing the city in the upcoming five to ten years?

Growth, sea level rise, transportation, and the future of Capitol Lake. We need to work with the county to see about the collection of impact fees and I've recently been learning more about that. I'm going to be interviewing Karen Valenzuela for the Thurston County Democratic newsletter. I'm very interested in hearing what people think, and they can email me about what they feel our most important issues are at *Ja9citycouncil@aol.com*.

What are your ideas about balancing the city budget during to the current crisis, with falling sales tax revenues?

It's hard. It would appear that we've cut all that we can cut without really suffering. As I mentioned earlier, creating partnerships might help. I'd like to hear more ideas about increasing efficiencies without cutting essential services.

What city services would you consider untouchable as far as budget cuts?

Public health and safety, such as police officers—they need to be fully funded. Fire, of course. The city needs to find ways to increase efficiency in ways that allow us to continue to provide services to maintain a high level of safety for our citizens.

What do you think about Olympia's downtown? Is it decaying, or is it a treasure?

I love downtown and feel comfortable hanging out, but I understand that many don't appreciate or understand our downtown. There is a legitimate problem with perception, partly due to its appearance on major corridors. My daughter and I used to live downtown in many rentals surrounding the library and because I didn't know how to drive, our life was centered around downtown. I walked to Mark-It Foods (now Bayview), Yardbirds, and took the bus to other places I needed to go. We need more essential services downtown. I miss Yardbirds. It had everything I needed.

I would like to explore the barriers people have in coming downtown. It is true in my own experience as a caregiver for the elderly, it is hard to safely bring them into the inner core and easily get into a restaurant, for example. My clients prefer to go to the Olive Garden or the Starbucks in Lacey.

Now I'm a homeowner on the Eastside, but I still take full advantage of all the free events held downtown. It is these events that have shaped my children's world view of Olympia as they have grown up: Artswalk, the Procession, the Wooden Boat Fair, Music in the Park, the Pet Parade, the Ethnic Celebration Day, Pride Day, etc. It's a treasure.

What do you like best about Olympia?

It's a safe environment where you can be yourself. I feel very comfortable expressing myself, learning and challenging myself without feeling like it's too harsh of an environment, because I have so many friends, and there are so many great organizations to plug into. Depending on your interests, I think you would have to like being lonely in order to not find some group or cause to get engaged with.

If elected, what would you most like to accomplish during your time as a councilmember?

If elected, I would be accessible and foster an atmosphere where citizens are encouraged to develop ad hoc grassroots focus groups on any issue that concerns them. What I've seen is that citizens are doing this, or want to do more of this. I would respect their efforts. I would like to see the information that they bring forth incorporated into policy. That way, we'll all have a vested interested in good, open government.

I want to change the culture of the council to welcome anyone who may feel disassociated with the process or politics and help them feel like they've made a difference. I see a lot of correlation with what I do in my life, things that lead toward self-empowerment, because then that can be passed on to our kids.

I am very interested in facilitating cross-class events, public-private partnerships, identify the needs and pair those up with those who have the resources. And because I have a background in events coordination, I'd really like to encourage these groups to meet face to face. Good relationships will develop out of this, and that's how our community will become stronger. And I really look forward to working with the community on our Comprehensive Plan – which will be critical -- as a city councilmember.

For more information, visit Janine Gates' website at oly-wa.us/Janine4Olympia.

Recent city council race developments

Hava Aviv exits council race

A message from Hava Aviv:

To my supporters and members of the Olympia community:

A short time has passed since my announcement to run for City Council, Seat 5. In this time, I have come to learn large things and gain a deeper and fuller understanding of what it would mean to hold a City Council position, as well as the process to run for public office. I have also come to see that I have many things I need to learn and participate in before running for public office.

I am withdrawing from the race... for a number of reasons. I hear that many others are planning on announcing their intention to run for City Council, and I will be focusing my attention and energy to those who will be running. The Olympia community can look forward to seeing my work attached with City Council now and in the near future. I plan on applying for several of the committees for the next several years in order to bring my politics to a more public level, and engage with the politics of our city more intimately.

I thank all of those who offered their support and advice over the past couple of months!

Janine Gates enters council race

Press release: Business owner and long-time community organizer Janine Gates has announced that she is running for Olympia City Council Position #5. Her website address is oly-wa.us/Janine4Olympia.

Gates' top priorities will be to improve council responsiveness to citizen activism and restore public confidence in the council's decision-making process.

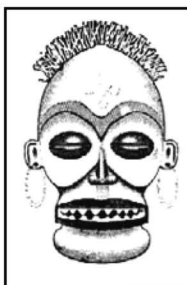
Gates says she will be attentive to small business concerns and will work to pursue incentives to help downtown businesses succeed. She is also interested in actively involving the public in the update of Olympia's Comprehensive Plan.

Gates is self-employed as a photographer, janinegatesphotography.com, and caregiver for the elderly. She is a member of the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce and a past member of the Lacey and Shelton Chambers of Commerce. Gates is also the volunteer president of the South Puget Environmental Education Clearinghouse (SPEECH) which publishes the South Sound Green Pages. As a freelance journalist, she publishes a local news blog, janineslittlehollywood.blogspot.com.

Gates organized the successful "Envision Downtown Olympia," forum with varied stakeholders last June. She plans to hold regular information gathering meetings with the public.

Gates says she opposed increasing heights on the isthmus in downtown Olympia from the very beginning. She was the first citizen to testify in front of the Olympia City Council against the proposed rezone. Gates supports Senator Karen Fraser's isthmus-related legislative efforts.

Gates graduated from The Evergreen State College in 1987 with a B.A. in Communications and Community Development. Gates has previously worked for state agencies and the Legislature. She has two children.



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OIPA takes position on Mayor Mah's bond proposal

by Olympia Isthmus Park Association

On March 10, Mayor Mah proposed seeking voter approval for a $33 million bond issue, to be paid for by a 20-year property tax increase of approximately 0.42 per $1,000 assessed value or $105 on a home assessed at $250,000. The bond proceeds would be allocated as follows:

$13.5 million for the rebuilding of Percival Landing as planned and designed. $3 million for the completion of the Heritage Park Fountain block including acquisition, remediation, and development of parcels 12, 13, and 14 (fountain block) as identified in the Isthmus Park Feasibility Study. $16.5 million for the acquisition, demolition, remediation, design, and development of parcels 4 and 5 (Capital Center Buildings), as identified in the Study.

The Council referred the proposal to the General Government Committee to focus on the logistics and the Finance Committee to focus on its financial aspects. Mayor Mah agreed to work with the General Government Committee to host a meeting on the community's vision for the Isthmus Park. Committee recommendations were requested for Council action on May 5.

The Olympia Isthmus Park Association (OIPA) endorses and welcomes the support of the Mayor and Council for moving forward on the development of an Isthmus Park and the renovation of Percival Landing. The Mayor's proposal is an important step in the right direction and the linkage of Percival Landing and the Isthmus Park in the proposal is consistent with OIPA's vision of an open, accessible, and integrated public Olympia waterfront.

Furthermore, the OlPA is particularly pleased that the Council in its referrals acknowledges and supports broad public input on this important community matter.

With the Mayor's proposal on the table, it is important that the Council and its committees move forward to refine and implement the proposal in the most effective and responsible manner. In order to accomplish this, the Council should be mindful of the following prerequisites for a good public process and a successful outcome:

Community input
Broad based community input in to the scope, timing and size of the bond proposal is imperative. Asking the voters of the City to shoulder additional tax burdens given the state of the economy should only be done if a community consensus on the proposal has been achieved. This is not a matter that should be rushed or for which corners should be cut for expediency.

Transparency
The process and the details of the bond proposal should be transparent to the citizenry. All cost and spending estimates should be verifiable and based on readily available sources such as the Isthmus Park Feasibility Study.

Timing
The timing of any ballot measure should be calculated to optimize the likelihood of success. Unless polling or other data strongly suggests otherwise, we are concerned that 2009 does not look like a good year for passage.

Coordination
In the current public finance climate, there is a strong likelihood that there may be other increases in tax burden from State, regional, and local jurisdictions. Further, there is at least one ballot measure for funding open space, shoreline, critical habitat and similar projects that is being considered at the county level. Any request to the voters to shoulder additional tax burdens should be coordinated in order to avoid detrimental competition between and among processes and projects to the greatest extent possible.

> Broad based community input into the scope, timing and size of the bond proposal is imperative.

Amount
The total amount of the proposed bond authority should be carefully examined after consideration of leveraging opportunities and other potential funding requests going to the voters in order to optimize the chances for success.

Geographic scope
Amending the geographic scope of the proposal is warranted. First, there is no apparent need to include Fountain Block (the Traditions building). Eventual funding for this acquisition is already in the City planning process and there is no apparent exigency that would require accelerating its acquisition and development. Second, the Mayor's proposal excludes the parcels west of the Capitol Center (Mistake-by-the-Lake); it should be expanded to cover the entire area studied in the Feasibility Study. These parcels are critical to the park concept. To ask the voters to fund the demolition of one high-rise while encouraging the building of two more high-rise buildings on the adjacent lots makes little sense.

Rather than print yet another photo of the isthmus, we thought you might be impressed with this entertaining photo of a dog with a funny hat.

Leveraging funding
The feasibility study explicitly found that an Isthmus Park would have potential appeal to a broad range of funding sources. Consequently, any City funding should acknowledge and optimize the potential for leveraging contributions from other funding sources, not supplant and replace them.

Flexibility
The bonding measure should be designed to allow the flexibility to react to the real estate market and to maximize leveraging opportunities. The Park acquisition funds should not be specified as to which amounts for which parcels, but rather, the entire Isthmus area (other than the Fountain Block) should be designated as eligible and the monies allowed to flow to where they can be most effective as acquisition and funding opportunities arise.

Outside expertise
The investment of City funds into the process and the importance and magnitude of the projects warrants utilizing the best expertise available. The City should obtain the services of outside experts (such as the Trust for Public Land) on public park ballot measures.

For additional information contact either: Jerry Reilly (Chair of Olympia Isthmus Park Association Jerryreilly@msn.com John Bay (Chair of the OIPA Monitoring Committee) Johnbay@pobox.com

New grassroots group endorses Veldheer for Olympia City Council

by WIP News Service

The Citizens for Responsive Local Government (CRLG) announced their endorsement of Karen Veldheer for this November's Olympia City Council race, according to CRLG Spokesperson Thad Curtz. The group is poised to disclose two additional endorsements after the candidates have officially announced their bids for office.

Karen Veldheer is running for the seat being vacated by retiring councilmember Karen Messmer. Planning Commission Chair Amy Tousley and Karen Rogers, who is a rules coordinator for the state liquor board, have also filed for that council position. Upcoming endorsements regard candidates for the seats currently held by councilmember Jeff Kingsbury and by councilmember Joan Machlis, who was appointed in January, 2008.

> The CRLG was organized largely in response to the deaf ears turned to the public by the current council over the isthmus controversy.

Both Kingsbury and Machlis have declared their candidacy for a second term, and have begun campaigning and fundraising. Joe Hyer has also announced he will seek re-election; Tony Sermonti, who works for the state Democratic caucus, is running against him. The CRLG does not anticipate endorsing a candidate in that race in the immediate future.

Karen Veldheer founded her local neighborhood association and has been active in the Coalition of Neighborhood Associations. *WIP* readers may remember her as the Cooper Crest resident who has vigorously petitioned the City of Olympia to redress stormwater issues and other problems affecting the houses of her and her neighbors, in the supposedly "low impact" subdivision developed by Triway Enterprises. In a press release, Veldheer said she would be receptive to public input.

"People spend a great deal of time and energy studying critical local issues, and they feel that they are not being heard," Veldheer said. "This is a tragedy in a city with such a rich history of public involvement." Veldheer is opposed to raising building heights on the area between Budd Bay and Capitol Lake popularly known as "the isthmus."

The CRLG was organized largely in response to the deaf ears turned to the public by the current council over the isthmus controversy. The CRLG recruited and encouraged strong candidates who are committed to representing voters more responsively than the current council. Although several members of the CRLG are active with Friends of the Waterfront (FOTW), the group also includes a number of community members who are not affiliated with the FOTW.

"While the isthmus rezone was a litmus test for the CRLG, we looked beyond the isthmus and downtown to a candidate's vision for all of Olympia," said Walt Jorgensen, CRLG member. He added that while all three candidates have their own positions on the full spectrum of city issues, their common characteristic is the special importance they attach to listening and to reconciling their own views with those of the public.

Having decided upon its endorsements for the 2009 city council campaign, CRLG plans to continue by offering campaign support to current candidates, as well as seeking out strong candidates to run for other local offices in the future.

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Special Ed forced labor in Puget Sound Schools

by Brooke Stepp & Jeff Berryhill

In a number of schools in the Puget Sound region, students involved in special education programs have been forced to undertake tasks outside what is usually found in standard academic coursework for students with special needs. Typically, parents of special needs students, in collaboration with educators and specialists, develop an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) in order to develop an academic program that is specific to the individual needs of the student. This plan is supposed to reflect the interests and strengths of the students in a way that also enhances their ability to learn. But some parents are finding that these programs do not truly serve the needs of the students.

One student, Colton Daline, has attended a number of schools in the Puyallup School District since elementary school. He has significant difficulties communicating through speech. Nevertheless, according to Colton's father Bernie Daline, "Colton likes anything with art, working on the computer, really anything he can build. He likes to be creative, to invent things.... He is a heck of an artist, loves to draw. He loves astronomy, anything about space and animals. Colton just loves science."

Along these lines, Bernie suggested to the school district on a number of occasions that "it would be helpful to our son if they could acquire some graphic arts computer programs and share them with our son to accentuate his talent in that area." Bernie was under the impression that such a program could enhance his son's artistic ability and encourage further academic development. However, this request and others similar to it, including increased speech therapy, have been ignored and neglected by the school. This matter is especially troubling because the school district receives an additional ten thousand dollars from the state for every special needs child in attendance, precisely so they can provide supplemental programs and assistance for students with special needs.

According to Bernie, instead of adhering to the suggestions laid out in their IEPs, students like Colton are lumped into a program that treats all disabilities uniformly. These classrooms are called general developmentally delayed classrooms, and skills elementary for functioning, such as using the restroom, are taught. For a student like Colton, this can create many problems because of the specific nature of his disability. As a result of being placed in a setting that was not responsive to his needs, Colton began to mirror the range of behaviors exhibited in the classroom, ultimately stunting his academic development further.

> Schools are clearly taking advantage of their special needs students.

Instead of providing the academically focused curriculum the children deserve that allows them to adequately develop their skills or strengths, the school is cutting corners in requiring them to do janitorial and administrative tasks. These tasks include "scrubbing windows, wiping down tables, collecting trash, and filing paperwork," according to Bernie. In addition, while collecting trash, the students were not given adequate safety equipment, such as gloves. This is especially disturbing because students would collect discarded cigarette butts, used condoms, and broken glass.

Bernie recently lost a due process hearing in which the school district claimed that Colton was receiving "vocational training." But schools are clearly taking advantage of their special needs students when they compel them to participate in such activities. Due to the nature of their disability, some special needs students are unable to communicate about the ways they are being hurt at school. Failing to provide necessary equipment or therapy specific to a student's disability, despite extra funds allocated for such services, shows a failure by the school to demonstrate a commitment to special needs education.

When students are engaged in nonacademic pursuits, this also allows the school to employ fewer para-educators and other special needs staff that would normally be meeting the academic needs of these students. Also, special needs students are effectively involved in work normally reserved for paid, often unionized, employees, without any compensation or labor protections, resulting in reduced employment opportunities for workers. In other words, this is not just an issue of children's or disability rights, but is a labor issue as well.

Despite these setbacks, parents such as Daline and concerned community members are fighting back. Bernie is appealing the judge's finding, this time with the help of a specialized lawyer. On a number of occasions, Bernie has picketed in front of various administrative buildings and schools belonging to the Puyallup School District to get the word out about his family's experience. This could be happening in your community too.

Bernie advises, "It is important to research the law and gain an understanding of what rights students and parents have. There are a number of valuable sources of information available on the web. It is important to act fast. If there is an injustice in your child's curriculum or education, file a complaint, or sign up for a due process hearing. This is where potential concerns gain the most attention... Don't take for granted that the district is always working with your child's best interest in mind, because they often do not. Also, look for advocacy groups; a number of them exist. They can provide valuable knowledge and assistance. Don't give up. If you feel like you're losing ground, reach out to other people, you will often find support. Until we all get together on board to do this, nothing is going to change."

Groups such as Olympia IWW have committed to working on this issue and are hoping to begin an organizing drive among special needs students across the Puget Sound. A community forum involving parents, students, educators, and community members is planned for the near future.

Brooke Stepp and Jeff Berryhill are longtime local activists and members of the Olympia chapter of radical labor union Industrial Workers of the World.

The Olympia zeitgeist: A psychological analysis

by John Van Eenwyk

Part Four

In our first three analyses, we saw how symbols motivate people. We noted that three groups have competed with one another to determine public policy in Olympia. We named these hostility/destruction, craving/exploitation, and reverence/preservation. While each is motivated by similar images, each invests those images with meanings that turn them into symbols.

Autonomous symbols

Sometimes, images are so graphic that they create symbols on their own. Such is the case with two images that dominate the Olympia skyline today. The first are those silent sentinels of stupidity: the Port of Olympia's giant cranes. The second is that testimonial to graft and corruption: the Capitol Center (otherwise known as "the mistake by the lake"). Each in its own way highlights the mistakes we have made in the past that complicate the demands of the future.

The two multi-million dollar cranes were intended to make Olympia a deep water port. Unfortunately, the water isn't very deep. Standing idle for years, the cranes have now pointed the way to Olympia's future, for they have become the nesting place for Peregrine falcons. Could there be a more obvious symbol of the transformation of Olympia's rust-belt past into an ecologically responsible future?

As for the Capitol Center, perhaps Sam Bradley had the right idea: Purchase and demolish it. What an ugly building! It doesn't just block the view; it trashes it. Would that in 2000 we had told the terrorists bent on blowing up the Space Needle that the Capitol Center was a CIA headquarters. We could have been rid of it for free.

But, no. For the moment at least, we're stuck with it. does anyone actually like it? No one I know. It stands as perhaps the most graphic example of how the zeitgeist ("the spirit of the times") of Olympia has shifted. Where once it symbolized growth and potential, now it symbolizes rust and decay.

The fourth group

In addition to the three groups we studied in the first three of our essays, there is a large, mostly quiet, fourth group of citizens who try to live good lives, who respect the environment, patronize local businesses and value sustainability. They don't like what the Port and City Council are doing. That they rarely identify themselves as a group leads their voice to be largely unheard. Confrontation is not their style. They prefer to coexist.

Give them a cause, however, and their will can be felt. They vote. And while votes may be silent, they speak loudly.

This groupless group expects public servants to govern according to the highest values. A City Council that raises height limits before assigning cost to acquiring land for public use galls them. That such an act benefits a developer who contributes liberally to Council members' campaigns appalls them. They may not cry out in protest, but when they vote, they remember.

> Either way, the wilderness gives us fair warning: Preserve, or die.

Port Commissioners and City Council members who are wedded to images viewable only in rear-view mirrors generally fail to recognize the stirrings within this fourth group. But reverence/preservation does, for it lives by the same values. Craving/exploitation and hostility/destruction are foreign to them. In fact, implementation of the shift in the zeitgeist of Olympia will occur primarily through this fourth group.

Craving/exploitation lives through greed. Hostility/destruction lives through fear. Reverence/preservation and the fourth group live through ideals. Unlike the first two groups, the latter two are willing to sacrifice themselves for their ideals. For them, symbols are not images to be manipulated, but indicators of value.

And that makes all the difference. Reverence/preservation is the first to discern shifts in the zeitgeist. Hostility/destruction and craving/exploitation rarely perceive them, for the fear and greed that governs their perceptions creates the same symbols of all images. Times may change, but they don't. They're stuck in an endless feedback loop that has no room for change. For them, the future is irrelevant.

Wilderness as symbol

In our first essay, we noted Annie Dillard's description of wilderness as symbol. Wilderness is simply uncharted land, generally lacking in landmarks, that can elicit disorientation and vulnerability. The future is itself a wilderness. As the Greeks said: We go through life backwards, seeing only where we have been and never where we are going. Thusly do appeals to the known locate us in the past.

The wilderness of the future is the source of creation. For example, oceans may be trackless and disorienting, but all life originates there. Reverence/preservation understands this. Preserving wilderness cannot predict what kind of life will emerge. Reverence/preservation simply notes that interactions between individual and wilderness are fructifying by generating new and transformative images. These become the new symbols that maintain culture and civilization.

As we noted in part two, reverence/preservation is almost always at odds with hostility/destruction, yet sometimes aligns with craving/exploitation. Such an alliance can produce some of the best forms of culture and civilization that we witness today. Whenever craving/exploitation manipulates hostility/destruction to undermine reverence/preservation, however, violence is sure to follow.

Wilderness does not take kindly to violation. Destroy wilderness and the battle is engaged. Vandalism, civil disobedience, anarchy infuse the citizenry. The effects of pollution and crowding are subtler and more terrible. They also take longer to develop.

The wilderness future

Reverence/preservation saves hostility/destruction and craving/exploitation from themselves. Yet, far from recognizing and appreciating the effort, craving/exploitation and hostility/destruction routinely do all in their power to destroy reverence/preservation. Fortunately, in that game there is a wild card in the deck: It's the fourth group.

As the call from the wilderness increases in volume, which side will the fourth group join? How will they vote in the coming election? Will reverence/preservation carry the day? Or exploitation and destruction? Will useless cranes and ugly buildings populate Olympia's future? Or the majesty and mystery of wood and water?

No one knows. But the symbols are clear. Olympia's zeitgeist has changed. To recognize that shift is to usher in the future. To fail to recognize it is to cling hopelessly to the past.

Either way, the wilderness gives us fair warning: Preserve, or die.

John Van Eenwyk is a clinical psychologist and a psychoanalyst in Olympia, and a priest at St. Benedict's Episcopal church in Lacey. He is the clinical director and founder of the International Trauma Treatment Program in Olympia.

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Of Tea Parties and Teleprompters

By David Michael Green

Is it possible that the regressive right has, given its electoral unraveling of late, decided to swap the whole politics thing for vaudeville?

'Cause if it hasn't, I'm really having a hell of a hard time explaining what's going on with these guys.

I mean, I've seen circus acts that were less hilarious. So I'm assuming that the right has simply decided to become a sort of public service provider in this most depressing of times. Presumably, they got together and concluded that if they couldn't win elections, at least they could make themselves useful by treating the public to a hearty laugh. Or six.

What else can you make of last month's tea party hysteria, for example? I suppose you could find a less spontaneous, less authentic expression of public sentiment if you looked really hard – perhaps by going to the latest Hannah Montana movie, for example – but I don't think it would be very easy. Fox (Hardly Any) News literally ran about a hundred segments on the tea parties in advance of the magical date, a promotional tsunami masquerading as news reporting that would've made any Soviet minister of propaganda blush.

I suppose you could also find political elements more incoherent and less grounded in reality if you tried really hard – perhaps by attending services at some new age mega-church, for example – but that would also be pretty difficult. If the low rent, low IQ, low on laundry detergent (non) masses attending these events looked familiar, it was because we saw them on the campaign trail last year, angrily spouting utter fabrications and fulminating their vaguely anti-government screeds at Sarah Palin rallies. What they lack in quality dental care or concern about the health effects of obesity, they fully make up for in sheer gullibility and lumpen selfishness masquerading as vulgar capitalism.

My favorite bit from the coverage of the tea parties was the inadvertent reality intrusion episode, where some smart-ass got up at one of the rallies, got the crowd all excited about taxes and deficits, and then asked them to applaud Barack Obama for cutting their taxes. That little bit of cognitive dissonance produced a long, pregnant, troubled pause, and you could almost hear the rusty gears in their brains jamming into one another, screeching like a subway train, and ultimately shattering from sheer lack of prior use, as the attendees decided to stick with their advance programming after all, booing the mention of the shifty Negro in the White House despite the fact that he is cutting their taxes, just like they claim to want him to.

On the other hand, perhaps the most amazing sight of all was the Republican governor of Texas, successor to George W. Bush, and would-be successor again in Washington, not so vaguely hinting at the possibility that Texas might secede from the union, and falsely claiming that the state had a special legal right to do so. Golly, I thought we had settled that matter a century and a half ago, but then I'm one of those odd people who always thought Lincoln got it wrong. He should have let the backward, racist, theist, regressive South go its own way.

Of course, only if deceit happens to be a moral problem need one worry about the hypocrisy of all these red states bitching about taxes and the oppressive federal government while simultaneously receiving far more dollars from Washington than they kick in. But if they do check out, I only hope that Obama doesn't make the same mistake Lincoln did. Imagine the last several decades without names like Bush, DeLay, Gingrich, McConnell, Armey, Lott and other fine specimens of Southern hospitality running the country into the ground. Let them have their little experiment in trying to form a more perfect union within their breakaway Confederacy. Maybe they'll put Bobby Jindal in charge. You want to have a good laugh? Come back a generation later and see what it looks like. My guess is something like a crystal meth theme park, with nice colored folk to clean up after the revival meetings. "LeeLand", perhaps?

You know who else showed up at tea parties, besides Rick Perry, the sesesh governor of Texas? That's right! Joe the Plumber! And, just to make sure that no political sophistication of any sort whatsoever inadvertently crept into the crowd, Ted Nugent came as well. With head-liners like this, it's hard to figure how these guys aren't winning elections, eh? On the other hand, I can name at least one guy more clownish and more scary who was president of the United States and leader of the Free World for eight years running. And just recently too. Ironically, the explanation for the odd fact that the exact same stuff that seemed so great to people of the US in 2002 seemed so awful in 2008 was of course George W. Bush himself. Yep, politics is truly weird sometimes, but it's on the right where the weird absolutely turn professional.

> The great news is that, as bad as it now is, these are still the golden days of the regressive movement. It's gonna get a lot worse from here.

All of this is emblematic, of course, of a political movement in utter free fall, and completely lacking any sense whatsoever of what to do about it. This week it was tea parties. Before that, it was Obama bowing to the Saudi king. Before that, it was the President giving the Queen of England an iPod. Or was it the fact that he uses Teleprompters when he speaks? Or was it the connection to Rod Blagojevich that was sure to be exposed any minute now?

Seriously, though. Where's the outrage? Is there a surer mark of the end of Western civilization than that the US public is indifferent about the fact that its president – like every modern president – uses a Teleprompter when he gives speeches? Remember the burning anger on the right,

when Ronald Reagan would use his ubiquitous 3 x 5 note cards at every meeting or event, even for small talk about the weather, and sometimes absentmindedly using the wrong set of cards for the wrong gathering of people? Talk about your Armageddon! It's weird, though. I guess I need to lay off the drugs for a while, because I don't remember any conservative umbrage about any of that. You'd almost think they were being ridiculously hypocritical in attacking Obama for using a Teleprompter, given what Reagan did...

And how about that business with the Saudi king? Doesn't that represent Obama selling out the US? Or apologizing for something the US did? He probably didn't even have a flag pin in his lapel when he bowed to the king. He probably didn't even thank Jesus for his falafel, before breaking bread with the monarch. Not George Bush, though. He would never do that. His family would never have close relations with the House of Saud, that's for sure. He would never be photographed, say, holding hands with the old man, 'cause that would disrespectful to the US. And kinda gay, too. And, for sure, Bush would never inform Prince Bandar, lifetime buddy and Saudi ambassador to the US at the time, that the US was invading Iraq, before he informed his own Secretary of State. And you know why? Because the right wing in the US would be outraged if that ever happened. You can take that one to the bank.

Except, of course, that we don't really have much in the way of banks anymore, after the right wing's deregulatory religion got through with them. Which I guess explains why all those things did happen, and

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Teabaggers at the Capitol in Olympia on April 15. (Photos by Jim Mayfield)

▸ **TEABAGGERS** continued from page 7

the same people who are now foaming at the mouth over Obama's simple gesture of courtesy were completely silent during the Bush years.

These antics only prove how deeply sunk into it regressivism now is. I assure you, if the right had a better way to attack Democrats and the Obama administration than this pathetic garbage, you'd be seeing it. These guys aren't exactly famous for playing to lose. What we're seeing, instead, is a political movement that is utterly bankrupt, literally and figuratively, and is desperately searching for any sort of remotely plausible line of attack, but only managing to make itself look absurd in the process, at least outside of Appalachia.

Today's conservatives remind me of nothing so much as an elderly lab chicken, used in countless undergrad psychology experiments, but now abandoned in its dotage. Over and over again, it keeps pecking the red bar, even though the last time a food pellet actually appeared was in 2004. Peck! Let's play the race card! Peck! Let's play the taxes card! Peck! Let's play the deficits card! Peck! Let's play the gay card! Peck! Let's play the foreign bogeyman card! Peck! Peck! Peck!

Shit! No food pellets! The red bar is in tatters, the chicken's beak is worn down to a nub, but still it pecks, and still no food pellets.

The frustration and anger you see among regressive politicians and their cheerleaders comes from fifty years of operant conditioning all of a sudden gone massively awry. It's like they fell into some parallel universe or something. Every step forward leaves them two steps backward. Up is down, down is up. White is black, and black is now president. What the hell is going on?

Poor regressives. For half a century they got an entire country full of people to suspend disbelief, and nod their heads in all the right places whenever they were poked with the appropriate stimulus. For half a century, they continued to win elections by fooling people into voting against their own interests. For half a century, they could turn lead into gold. But the alchemy no longer works. Suddenly, precipitously, none of the responses appear anymore when all the old stimuli are trotted out. And it all disappeared so fast. In 2003 they could sell any kind of bullshit imaginable. Three years later, they were handing over control of both houses of Congress to the evil, socialist Democrats.

The great news is that, as bad as it now is, these are still the golden days of the regressive movement. It's gonna get a lot worse from here. As they continue their antics, they only look more and more foolish, while President Obama looks more and more statesmanlike, less and less like his predecessor, and better and better in the polls.

The logical move for the Republican Party would be to abandon the insanity of the last three decades and return to the days of Gerald Ford and Nelson Rockefeller, when people like Ronald Reagan were rightly (very rightly) considered to be the lunatic fringe. But this is impossible today. Indeed, the GOP will be lucky if it is able to even stay where it is ideologically, as opposed to being pulled even further to the hysterical right.

Arlen Specter will provide the archetypical case for the Republican conundrum as he runs for reelection to his Pennsylvania US Senate seat this year and next. As an established, long-standing moderate figure from a swing state, normally someone like Specter should have no problem as an incumbent retaining his seat. In fact, the opposite is now the case. Specter is being challenged from his right in the primary election, and there is no indication that the Republican establishment will come to his aid, while every indication suggests that he's in deep trouble. One recent poll had him fourteen points down among Republican voters behind his primary challenger. Specter will have to tack to the hard right to have a prayer of obtaining the nomination. But even if that make-over can possibly succeed, he will then be stuck in the general election trying to defend the monster he became during the primary in order to placate his party's voters, in a state that is trending the other direction.

Watch and see if the few remaining moderate Republicans don't learn from this experience, and abandon the party. This will leave the GOP in excellent position to succeed everywhere that Jefferson Davis remains a hero, and pretty much nowhere else. Even the governor of Utah, arguably the reddest of red states, has come out in support of gay marriage.

If Republicans want to form themselves into a permanent minority at the national level, I suppose that's just fine with me. But even that isn't terribly sustainable. Situations like these tend toward becoming self-reinforcing cycles, in this case far more virtuous than vicious. Over time, a party that cannot compete at the national level will not attract voters or candidates even within its stronghold. And a party that cannot bring home the bacon because it has been relegated to a permanent minority status in Congress will also drive away voters. A party that is unable to change its stripes because of the viciousness and narrow-mindedness of its base is also a party unable to change its electoral fortunes.

When you see the supporters of the GOP saying, as they often do, that they would rather stick to principle than win elections, they're not kidding. And when you see them describe the likes of George W. Bush as insufficiently conservative, they're not kidding either.

Rather, they're on a suicide mission.

All I can say is: "Hey, works for me!"

David Michael Green is a professor of political science at Hofstra University in New York. This was originally published at counterpunch.org

> *Too long have the workers of the world waited for some Moses to lead them out of bondage. He has not come; he will never come. I would not lead you out if I could; for if you could be led out, you could be led back again. I would have you make up your minds that there is nothing you cannot do for yourselves.*
>
> Eugene Debs, speaking for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) on 12/10/1905.
>
> Olympia Local
> American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

May is Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Awareness Month

by Daisy Ouye

So, what *is* that scent you're wearing? There are no laws requiring the manufacturers of perfumes and other scented products to inform you of their ingredients. When byproducts form by combining them, they don't have to tell consumers that either. The word "fragrance" can mean up to 200 undisclosed chemicals that don't have to be tested for safety. In fact, many of them are known to cause health problems.

It's no wonder 30 percent of people in the United States have noticeable, sometimes debilitating, reactions to such products. Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, or MCS, is a disability that causes individuals to react to even the lowest levels of toxins because of previous chemical exposure. Reactions can range from burning eyes after your husband sprayed that so-called "air freshener" this morning, to sinus irritation from your neighbor's dryer sheets, to a sudden migraine from a single whiff of granny's cologne or cigarette, to life-threatening symptoms because of the pesticide your apartment manager didn't tell you was being used. Inundated with pollutants, it is difficult, if not impossible for those affected to carry on their lives as usual. Pollen, mold, and even some natural products, like orange oil, can trigger a reaction.

> A CFSC study found half of infant products contain cancer causing ingredients such as formaldehyde.

Those who develop this lowered tolerance are often industrial workers, occupants in "tight" buildings, residents from contaminated communities, war veterans and individuals with personal exposures to chemicals in a world growing more toxic.

My story

When I was young my neighborhood was sprayed with pesticides to control mosquitoes. My health problems began in those early years although my awareness of MCS occurred only somewhat recently. I began researching the pesticides that "fogged" the residential area in Michigan where I had lived. Among other health problems I'd had sinus complications, earaches, leg and foot cramps, along with migraine headaches.

I noticed my sensitivity when I began to remove chemicals from my environment. This state of constant existence within chemical environments can "mask" the condition. There's no denying it now. I keep an air ionizer/purifier at home and wear a small one while working. There is no chemical-free place, so I wear a mask when I have to go out. A clinical detoxification called an "unmasking," places the patient in a room that is completely chemical free, down to the adhesives used to hold the room together. The patient would then be held for several days before their reactions to chemicals were tested.

What to do

Currently there are no such clinical detoxification facilities. Coupled with the fact that only a small percentage of US doctors are familiar with environmental illnesses like MCS, patients often elude diagnosis or are treated with pharmaceuticals (chemicals) for their symptoms. Treatment should consist largely of avoidance of chemicals, immune system support and detoxification. Funding is needed on the federal and state levels for public awareness campaigns and support for individuals already suffering.

May was designated as MCS Awareness month by gubernatorial proclamation. To increase your awareness, start checking labels for harmful chemicals. A study by the Campaign For Safe Cosmetics found that half of infant products contain cancer causing ingredients such as formaldehyde. It can be a challenge but healthy chemical free replacements are out there. Consider using an organic fertilizer on your lawn this year, or go "fragrance free"-- it's possible! These small changes promote a healthy life for you and your family, and they'll make a world of difference to the "masked" MCS sufferers in your life.

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